



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Office of Pollution Prevention and
Toxics (7404)

EPA-747-F-01-004
October 2019

Fight Lead Poisoning with a Healthy Diet

Lead Poisoning Prevention
Tips for Families



Lead and a Healthy Diet

What You Can Do to Protect Your Child

Lead's Effects on the Body

Lead is a poisonous metal that our bodies cannot use. Lead poisoning can cause learning, hearing, and behavioral problems, and can harm your child's brain, kidneys, and other organs. Lead in the body stops good minerals such as iron and calcium from working right. Some of these effects may be permanent.

Lead Awareness and Your Child

Children with lead poisoning usually do not look or act sick. The only way to know if your child has lead poisoning is by getting a blood test. Ask your doctor or health care provider to test your child under six years of age at least once a year.

Lead poisoning occurs without any
obvious symptoms
& **Harms** your child's
body.

Lead Hazards

Where is Lead Found?

Main Sources of Lead

Lead-based paint is a hazard if it is peeling, chipping, chalking, or cracking. Even lead-based paint that appears to be undisturbed can be a problem if it is on surfaces that children chew or that get a lot of wear and tear. The older your home is, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint.

Contaminated dust forms when lead paint is dryscraped or sanded. Dust can also become contaminated when painted surfaces bump or rub together. Lead chips and dust can gather on surfaces and objects that people touch or that children put into their mouths.

Contaminated soil occurs when exterior lead-based paint from houses, buildings, or other structures flakes or peels and gets into the soil. Soil near roadways may also be contaminated from past use of leaded gasoline in cars. Avoid these areas when planting vegetable gardens.

Other Sources of Lead

- Contaminated drinking water from older plumbing fixtures
- Lead-based painted toys and household furniture
- Imported lead-glazed pottery and leaded crystal
- Lead smelters
- Hobbies
- Folk remedies like azarcon and pay-loo-ah
- Cosmetics, like kohl and kajal

Meal and Snack Ideas

Tips to Help You and Your Children Plan Meals and Snacks

Breakfast

Oatmeal swirlers
Sliced banana
Orange juice

Or

Cheese omelet
Applesauce
Low-fat milk

Or

French toast
Orange sections
Low-fat milk

Lunch

Grilled cheese and tomato
Coleslaw
Low-fat milk

Or

Tuna salad sandwich
Cranberry juice
Pear slices

Or

Pizza bagel
100% fruit juice
Fresh or canned peaches
Low-fat milk

Dinner

Sloppy joes
Watermelon
Low-fat milk

Or

Macaroni and cheese
Stewed tomatoes
Melon slice

Or

Chicken stew
Rice
Strawberries

Between meals offer small snacks, such as cereal with low-fat milk, whole wheat crackers with cheese, apple or pear slices, oranges or bananas, raisins, yogurt, frozen fruit juice pops, and fruit smoothies.

Many of the foods listed in this brochure can be bought with food vouchers from the WIC program.

To find out more about WIC, call your child's pediatrician or visit www.fns.usda.gov/wic.



Oatmeal Swirlers

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups of quick cooking oats
- 1/3 cup of peanut butter
- 1/3 cup of fruit jelly or jam

Makes 4-6 servings

Preparation

1. Follow the package directions to cook oats.
2. Spoon peanut butter and jelly on top of cooked oatmeal.
3. Stir and spoon into bowls.
4. Serve with low-fat milk.



Cheese Omelet

Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 1 tablespoon of low-fat milk
- Vegetable oil
- 3 tablespoons of cheese

Makes 2-3 servings

Preparation

1. Mix eggs and milk in a bowl.
2. Lightly coat pan with vegetable oil. Use medium heat.
3. Add egg mixture and cook.
4. When omelet is cooked on the bottom, add cheese.
5. When cheese is melted, fold omelet in half.
6. Top with salsa if you like.
7. Serve with toast, fruit, and low-fat milk.

French Toast

Ingredients

- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cups of low-fat milk
- Vegetable oil
- 6 slices of bread
- Cinnamon
- 2 bananas, sliced

Makes 4-6 servings

Preparation

1. Mix eggs and milk.
2. Lightly coat pan with vegetable oil. Use medium heat.
3. Dip bread into egg mixture, so that bread is covered.
4. Brown one side of bread in pan.
5. Sprinkle top with cinnamon.
6. Turn over bread and brown the other side. Top with sliced banana.
7. Serve with low-fat milk.

Grilled Cheese and Tomato Sandwich

Ingredients

- 2 slices of bread
- 2 slices of American cheese
- 1 slice of tomato
- Vegetable oil

Makes 1 serving

Preparation

1. Make sandwich using bread, cheese, and tomato.
2. Lightly coat pan with vegetable oil.
3. Brown sandwich on both sides over low heat to melt the cheese.
4. Serve with low-fat milk or fruit juice.



Tuna Salad Sandwich

Ingredients

- 4 slices of bread
- 1 can of water packed tuna
- 4 teaspoons of low-fat mayonnaise
- Onion and celery, chopped

Makes 2 servings

Preparation

1. Mix tuna with low-fat mayonnaise, onion, and celery.
2. Try your sandwich with cheese and tomato.
3. Serve with low-fat milk.



Pizza Bagels

Ingredients

- 1 bagel
- 2 tablespoons of tomato sauce
- Garlic, basil, or oregano
- 2 tablespoons of cheddar cheese or part-skim mozzarella

Makes 2-3 servings

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Slice open a bagel and place on a flat pan.
3. Add tomato sauce, seasonings, and cheese.
4. Bake for 3 minutes or until cheese melts.
5. Serve with fruit juice.

Sloppy Joes

Ingredients

- 1 pound of lean ground beef, turkey, or chicken
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1/2 green pepper, chopped

Makes 4-6 servings

- 1 cup of tomato sauce
- Your choice of seasonings
- 5 hamburger buns or pita pocket breads

Preparation

1. In a pan, cook lean ground meat, onion, and green pepper until meat is well done.
2. Drain fat.
3. Stir in tomato sauce and seasonings.
4. Cook for 5 to 10 minutes.
5. Spoon into hamburger bun or pita.
6. Serve with fruit juice.

Banana Strawberry Smoothie

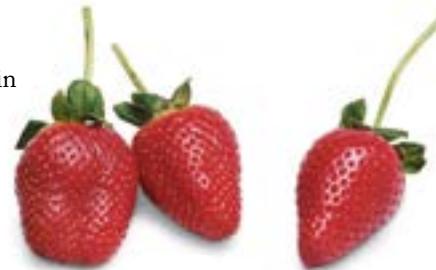
Ingredients

- 1 cup of low-fat milk
- 1 cup of fresh or frozen strawberries, mashed
- 1 ripe banana, mashed

Makes 2-3 servings

Preparation

1. Mix all together in a blender or use a wire whisk.
2. Eat as a snack or for dessert.



Chicken Stew

Ingredients

- 3 pounds of frying chicken, cut up into small pieces
- Vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped

Makes 6-8 servings

- 1 stalk of celery, chopped
- 28 ounce can of stewed tomatoes
- Poultry seasoning

Preparation

1. Lightly coat pot with vegetable oil. Use medium heat.
2. Cook chicken until it is well done.
3. Add can of stewed tomatoes.
4. Add vegetables and seasoning.
5. Cover and cook over low heat for 30 minutes.
6. Serve with rice or noodles



Baked Macaroni & Cheese

Ingredients

- 4 cups of cooked macaroni
- 3 cups of grated cheddar cheese
- Vegetable oil

- 2 tablespoons of margarine
- 2 cups of low-fat milk
- 2 tablespoons of flour
- Salt and pepper

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 375° degrees.
2. Lightly coat casserole dish with vegetable oil. Mix cooked macaroni with grated cheese. Pour into casserole.
3. Melt margarine in a pan. Remove from heat, stir in flour.
4. Return to heat. Add low-fat milk slowly, stirring until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Pour over macaroni. Stir and cover. Bake for 30 minutes.
6. Uncover and bake for another 15 minutes.



Regularly Eat Healthy Foods

The Importance of Iron, Calcium, and Vitamin-C

Children with empty stomachs absorb more lead than children with food in their stomachs. Provide your child with four to six small meals during the day. The following nutrients can help protect your child from lead poisoning:

Foods with Iron

Normal levels of iron work to protect the body from the harmful effects of lead. Good sources of dietary iron include:

- Lean red meats, fish, and chicken
- Iron-fortified cereals
- Dried fruits (raisins, prunes)

Foods with Calcium

Calcium reduces lead absorption and also helps make teeth and bones strong. Good sources of dietary calcium include:

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Green leafy vegetables (spinach, kale, collard greens)

Foods with Vitamin C

Foods with vitamin C and iron work together to reduce lead absorption. Good sources of vitamin C include:

- Oranges, orange juice
- Grapefruits, grapefruit juice
- Tomatoes, tomato juice
- Green peppers

A healthy diet can help protect your child from the harmful effects of LEAD.



Simple Steps You Can Take

to Protect Your Family from Lead Hazards

- Get your children tested for lead, even if they seem healthy.
- Make sure your children eat healthy, low-fat foods high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C.
- Always wash your hands before eating.
- Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys.
- Run water for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before drinking, especially if you have not used your water for a few hours.
- Use only cold water for making your baby's formula, drinking, and cooking.
- Do not use imported pottery to store or serve food.
- Regularly clean floors, windowsills, and other surfaces using wet methods that control dust.
- Wipe or remove shoes before entering your house.
- Get your home tested for lead by a lead-safe certified professional if it was built before 1978.
- If you rent, it is your landlord's job to keep paint in good shape. Report peeling or chipping paint to your landlord and call your health department if the paint is not repaired safely.
- Take precautions to avoid exposure to lead dust when remodeling or renovating.
- Don't try to remove paint yourself!

Lead poisoning is completely
PREVENTABLE.

For More Information

on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

Call:

- Your child's pediatrician
- The National Lead Information Center at **1-800-424-LEAD (424-5323)**
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline at **1-800-426-4791**

Visit:

- EPA's Lead Program website at www.epa.gov/lead
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website at www.hud.gov/offices/lead